

UpDate

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An SDRS Publication for Authorized Agents

SDRS Launches New Web Site: www.sdrs.sd.gov

Online Tools Speed Service, Streamline Reporting

AUTHORIZED AGENTS NOW

have a convenient, timesaving resource at their command: the new SDRS Web site (www.sdrs.sd.gov). You can use the site to find answers to members' questions, research up-to-the-minute information and submit accurate, secure contribution reports electronically.

The site's specialized tools make your job easier and quicker to perform. Three sections comprise the site. One section is open to everyone, the second is customized for active and retired members, and the third is designed specifically for authorized agents and employers.

Direct Access to Account Information at My SDRS

You can help members learn about SDRS and reduce their queries about their accounts by encouraging them to use the members' section of the Web site, *My SDRS*. Members can

- » view Personal Benefits Statement and look up their account information such as contribution totals, years of credited service, last 40 quarters of salary history, and current final average compensation
- » use the benefits calculator to estimate the value of their benefit
- » review addresses, beneficiaries, and other personal information to make sure it's up to date

The screenshot shows the SDRS website interface. At the top is the SDRS logo and the text 'SOUTH DAKOTA RETIREMENT SYSTEM'. Below this is a navigation bar with links: 'About SDRS', 'Retirement Planning', 'FAQs', 'Publications', and 'Contact SDRS'. The main content area features a large image of a smiling couple and the text 'South Dakota Retirement System'. Below this is a section titled 'My SDRS Personal Info' with a login form (Login ID, Password) and links for 'Forgot your password?' and 'New registration for My SDRS Personal Information'. To the right of the login form is a paragraph about the SDRS mission. Below the login form are three columns: 'Plan Features' (with links to Supplemental Retirement Plan, Special Pay Plan, Newsletters, and Legislative Updates), 'News & Events' (with a link to 2005 Legislative News), and 'Training' (with a link to SDRS on the Road). To the right of these columns is a section titled 'Announcements & Notes' with a link to SDRS Introduces. At the bottom of the page are three numbered callouts: 1. Use these links to find SDRS news, publications, retirement planning schedules, and calculators. 2. Members log in here to access My SDRS. First-timers choose the "New Registration" link to get an SDRS ID and password. 3. Log in here to submit monthly contribution reports electronically, or scroll to the bottom of the page for a link to the Employer Information area.

SDRS' New Web Site Address: www.sdrs.sd.gov

My SDRS is easy for members to use — a three-step online registration process is all that's needed to obtain a password and SDRS ID to access the site.

News and Information Available 'Round the Clock

You can find answers to common questions quickly in the Web site's

...continued on the following page

news and information section. Publicly accessible, these pages contain

- » news about events and legislative activity
- » SDRS publications
- » a purchase calculator to figure the cost of purchasing credited service
- » the schedules for individual counseling sessions and regional retirement planning seminars

Reporting via the Web Remains Easy

Online submission makes reporting contributions easy and accurate. Security features of the new Web site's employer section further enhance this fast, simple method for filing your monthly reports.

If you are already making contribution reports online, go to the employer section of the site and register using your employer ID

number. This one-time registration will establish your individual password.

Not yet reporting electronically? By following step-by-step instructions on the SDRS Web site, you can submit your contribution reports using a downloadable program or by uploading data directly from a payroll program. Visit www.sdrs.sd.gov to learn more about these timesaving tools. **UpDate**

Facts and Figures Link Agents, Finance Division

A MIGHTY FLOOD OF DATA pours into SDRS each year. In part, that data takes the shape of hundreds of monthly contribution reports and literally thousands of forms that add members, retire members and change members' account information. Making sure this river of facts and figures flows smoothly into the system is the responsibility of just eight people — the SDRS Finance Division.

"It's the job of the Finance Division to manage information as it enters the system," says Chief Finance Officer Jane Roberts, who oversees the division. "Most of that data comes to us through authorized agents, and so we rely on them for it to be accurate and timely."

Agents contact Finance Division staff members with questions about a wide range of topics, including new hires, terminations, monthly contribution reports, and payments made into the system — and each member of the Finance Division staff has a distinct area of expertise.

Daily reconciliation issues are handled by the division's supervisor, **Barb Rykhus**, who also compiles much of the information for the annual report.

Diane Kafka's voice is familiar to most agents — she balances

contribution reports with remittances and answers questions about electronic reporting, electronic payment transfers, spouse option eligibility, and leaves of absence.

Michelle Mikkelsen specializes in deposits and payouts for the Special Pay Plan and Supplemental Retirement Plan; an agent might hear from her if an employee has recently terminated and received a payout of sick and vacation leave.

Chris Stotts processes refunds and expired checks, and reminds employers to send termination paperwork for employees seeking refunds.

Kathy Bolte might call to request information about an employee who wants to purchase credited service. She also answers members' questions about their account balances and contribution refunds.

The division's two encoders, **Julie McBride** and **Brenda Traut**,



Left to Right: Barb Rykhus, Brenda Traut, Diane Kafka, Michelle Mikkelsen, Jane Roberts, Chris Stotts, Julie McBride and Kathy Bolte.

key in data from all of the forms sent to SDRS, including monthly contribution reports sent via hard copy and disk, and also take address changes directly from members.

Roberts encourages agents to call any time a member asks a question the agent doesn't feel comfortable answering. "Agents' questions are usually member-specific about such things as spouse option eligibility or purchase service payments," Roberts says. "These kinds of questions are best answered individually, and we're glad to help." **UpDate**

Rates for Purchasing Credited Service Reduced for Active Military


A LAW TAKING EFFECT July 1, 2005, will allow SDRS members activated into federal service in the National Guard or Reserves to purchase credited service at reduced rates. Members qualify for the reduced rates if they

- » were called to active federal military duty between February 1, 2002, and September 30, 2004

- » return to active SDRS status
- » purchase the service within two years of release from active military duty

Offering terms that were in effect prior to the 2004 rate hike, the law sets the rate to purchase credited service at 75 percent of the member and employer contribution rates

combined. The contribution rates that were applicable at the time the service was performed are used for calculating the purchase price. All other service purchase requirements remain the same.

Four other bills concerning SDRS and passed into law in 2005 address technical matters and have no material effect on SDRS members. 

The Answer Line Returning to Work Changes Retirees' Status, Benefits

A member in our department is retiring, but he hopes to return to work for us at a later date. If he does return, how will his status with SDRS change?

When retirees return to work for a participating unit, they must enroll as new members of SDRS. To qualify for retirement based on their re-employment, they must, as new members, meet the three-year vesting requirement.

Does the retirement process change if a member may return to work?

No. The possibility of returning to work at a later date has no effect on the retirement process. For all members, however, termination from employment must be final and complete before they can start to receive retirement benefits. This termination must be certified by each member's employer.

South Dakota law prohibits a member from making an agreement prior to retirement to return to work for an SDRS unit. If the member does return to work, he or she is subject to the same application process and all the requirements

associated with hiring new employees.

Does returning to work affect the member's current retirement benefit?

It depends on the terms of the member's retirement.

For Class A members taking normal retirement (age 65), or retiring under the "rule of 85,"

- » retirement benefit payments continue during re-employment
- » annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) are eliminated during re-employment

For members taking regular early retirement, which means they haven't reached the rule of 85,


- » retirement benefit payments are suspended during the period of re-employment
- » COLAs on these payments are eliminated during re-employment

Do these limitations apply to Class B Public Safety retirees who are re-employed as Class A members?

The limitations apply to Class B Public Safety members who take regular early retirement, meaning they do not qualify for the "rule of 75." Their retirement benefit will be suspended and COLAs eliminated during the period of re-employment.

The limitations do not apply to Class B Public Safety members who retire at their normal retirement age (age 55) or qualify for the rule of 75 and then return to work as Class A members. COLA increases, as well as retirement benefit payments, continue during re-employment.

If the member re-retires before becoming vested, are the SDRS contributions made during re-employment forfeited?

No. If a member works less than three years after re-entering the employ of an SDRS unit, the member is eligible to receive a refund of all employee contributions and 75 percent of employer contributions. The member also receives a payment of interest on these contributions at the interest rate in effect during the period of re-employment. 

SDRS STATE-WIDE INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE DATE	CITY	COUNTY	LOCATION	ADDRESS	DEADLINE TO SCHEDULE*
June 7, 2005	Gettysburg	Faulk, Potter	Medicine Rock Cafe	801 E. Hwy. 212	June 2
June 14, 2005	Sioux Falls (Teachers)	Minnehaha	Ramkota	2400 N. Louise	June 9
June 21, 2005	Webster	Day	Dakotah Bank	600 Main	June 16
June 28, 2005	Aberdeen	Brown	Ramkota	1400 8th Ave. NW	June 23
July 5, 2005	Desmet	Kingsbury	Super 8	288 Hwy. 14	June 30
July 12, 2005	Springfield	Bon Homme	Community Room	605 8th Street	July 7
July 19, 2005	Yankton	Yankton	Kelly Inn	1607 E. Hwy. 50	July 14
July 26, 2005	Flandreau	Moody	County Courthouse	101 E. Pipestone Ave.	July 21
August 2, 2005	Bison	Corson, Perkins	County Courthouse	100 E. Main	July 28
August 9, 2005	Sisseton	Roberts	Dakota Bank	321 E. Veteran Ave.	August 4
August 16, 2005	Vermillion	Clay	Coyote Student Center	Lincoln and Roosevelt Rooms	August 11
August 23, 2005	Clark	Clark	Community Room	111 W. 1st	August 18
August 30, 2005	Elk Point	Union	Community Room	209 E. Main	August 25
September 6, 2005	Huron	Beadle, Sanborn	Crossroads	100 4th Street	September 1
September 13, 2005	Redfield	Spink	Senior Center	728 Main Street	September 8
September 20, 2005	Eagle Butte	Dewey, Ziebach	Landmark Hall	S. Main	September 15
September 27, 2005	Salem	McCook	REA Room	236 N. Main	September 22
October 4, 2005	Parker	Turner	Community Bldg.	299 N. Main	September 29

* Individual retirement counseling sessions must be scheduled before noon on this date.

SDRS AUTHORIZED AGENT TRAINING SEMINARS

DATE	CITY	LOCATION	ADDRESS
July 20, 2005	Yankton	Kelly Inn	1607 E Hwy 50

SDRS staff members will hold the Authorized Agent training from 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. at the specified location. The training session will include helpful information for both newly appointed and existing agents, information on legislative changes, updates to SDRS forms and publications and the opportunity for participants to engage in a question and answer segment.



Reminders

- » SDRS has a new Web site address: www.sdrs.sd.gov
- » To contact SDRS by e-mail, visit www.sdrs.sd.gov and select "Contact SDRS."
- » Contributions must be received by July 15th. A penalty is levied on late contributions.
- » Authorized agents can switch to electronic reporting and ACH electronic transfers at any time, no matter what the size of their participating unit.

REGIONAL RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINARS

DATE	CITY	COUNTIES	LOCATION	ADDRESS
July 19, 2005	Yankton	Aurora, Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Gregory, Hutchinson, Turner, Union, Yankton	Kelly Inn	1607 E Hwy 50
October 18, 2005	Pierre	Brule, Buffalo, Campbell, Corson, Dewey, Faulk, Hand, Hughes, Hyde, Jerauld, Jones, Lyman, Mellette, Potter, Stanley, Sully, Todd, Tripp, Walworth	Ramkota	920 W Sioux

Retirement Planners will hold the regional meetings in the evening at the specified location. The seminar will provide information on SDRS benefits, a question and answer segment, and a presentation from the representative of the SDRS Supplemental Retirement Plan. All members of SDRS are encouraged to attend the regional meeting and to bring spouses or other individuals involved in their financial and retirement planning needs.

SDRS urges all members nearing retirement to watch for Retirement Planner visits to their county of residence and to schedule an individual appointment during those times. Please refer to the 2005 Individual Retirement Planner's Schedule for this information.

UpDate is produced to communicate the plan provisions, changes in law, and issues of interest to authorized agents of the South Dakota Retirement System. It is published with funds provided through the contributions of teachers, school boards, state government, state employees, county commissions, county employees, municipal governments, municipal employees, and other local units and employees.